

Mark 16:19-20 (W. Noel Tomkins) 71495

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One cannot but be struck with the unique character of the winding up of the Gospel of Mark. The testimony of every one who speaks seems to fail in its effects. The "young man" in the sepulcher, "sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment," beseeches the women not to be affrighted, for "He is risen," but to go with a message to the "disciples and Peter." They flee, however, afraid, trembling, and amazed. "Neither said they anything to any one." So much for the first communication. What as to a second? "Mary Magdalene... went and told those that had been with" Jesus how "that he was alive and had been seen of her." "And they, when they had heard... believed not!" Yet another case! The two, to whom He had "appeared in another form" as they walked and went into the country, went and told it unto the residue: neither believed they them."

We see then that in each case the testimony given through His own fails, and one would be disposed to be cast down, but that the value of His own direct word shines out by contrast, for so long as He is glorified, that is all we want. "Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen" (ver. 14), and then He adds those memorable words, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." Notice now the result of His direct speaking to them." So then after the Lord had spoken unto them... they went forth and preached everywhere." What a contrast! And has it no lesson for us? As believers do we not want Him to speak directly to us, in His word? And as servants, if grace uses us to bring the soul of a sinner to Himself, do we not need to be taken at once out of the way, as Philip was by the Spirit of the Lord" when the eunuch saw him no more. For (R. V.) he went on his way rejoicing" (Acts 8:39). That is, he was so happy that he forgot all about Philip! Surely, too, the same principle should prevail in our service to saints, "for," as says the apostle, "we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake" (2 Corinthians 4:5)-His own personal name.

There could have been nothing more grateful to the woman of Samaria than when the many more who believed because of His own word said explicitly to her, "We believe, not because of thy saying, for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Savior of the world." Nature might take that as a snub, but grace in her would give the saying a loud Amen.

What made the two going to Emmaus have their heart burn within them? Was it their conversation? It had been of Christ before the stranger joined them. Was it not Himself "while he talked with us by the way and while he opened to us the Scriptures"?

Moved with compassion, Jesus put forth His hand and touched the leper (in Mark 1:41), and said unto him, "I will; be thou clean." But let us not overlook what follows, nor divorce it from what precedes. "As soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed."

Is it not similar in the case of the disciples when He was on earth, and our own case now? What could that which calls itself the Church do for us with all its ordinances? Can it give us in them the peace and assurance that flow from these, His own words, "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you" (John 15:3)?

Moreover, is it not from His own lips speaking these words, "These things I have spoken to you being yet present with you," that we have also the truth of what He is for us now? Even thus, " whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name I will do it," and again, the further blessedness of the Holy Spirit's presence with us as the other Comforter who is to abide with us forever. The apostle, in writing to the Corinthians, may unfold the authority of the Holy Spirit in the assembly and the working of the various gifts, etc., but who unfolds to us what He is as adequately filling now His own place, as the Lord Himself?

Much more might be said as to the force of His own words. But this must be paramount for us each one-that when Peter asked Him, "Lord, and what shall this man do?" he was met with this reply, "If I will that he tarry till I come what is that to thee? Follow THOU ME" (John 21:20). Inferences upon His sayings may be current now, as then, among the brethren, but we are in no way absolved from our own personal allegiance to our Lord. Let us remember His words, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me" (John 10:27). May He ever give us grace so to do, for His name's sake! Amen.

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